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DeafLife

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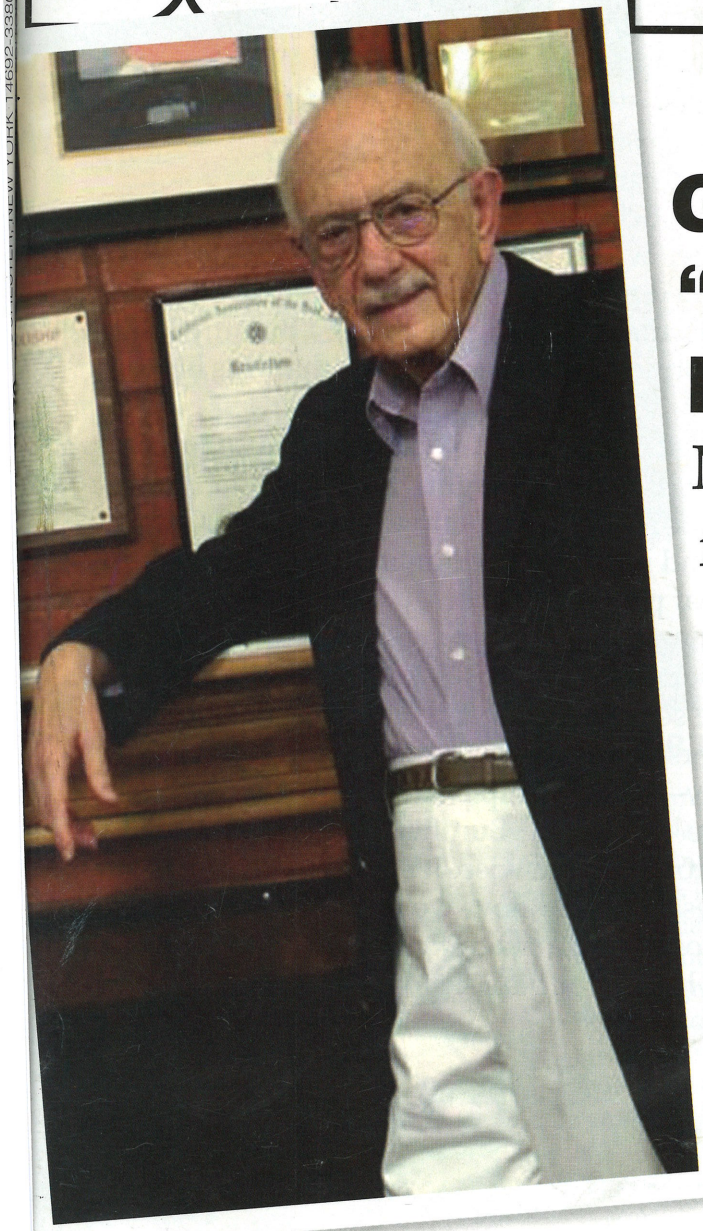


Gerald "Bummy" Burstein:

New honors for a veteran leader, outstanding citizen, advocate, & funny guy

Deaf Life PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Gerald "Bummy" Burstein first graced the cover of **DEAF LIFE** in April 1998, and it's a real pleasure to do an update. Ever since that first cover story, Bummy has continued to serve the community in his own inimitable way. California School for the Deaf, Riverside, where he put in 37 distinguished years of service, has honored him by setting up the G. "Bummy" Burstein Student Center in the former media-center office that was his "second home."

Everyone who has used "flying hands" (Deaf applause) owes Bummy a debt of gratitude. Bummy brought "flying hands" back from France to the 1986 NAD Youth Leadership Camp, the YLCers took it back to their schools, and nowadays, it's an indispensable part of any public gathering of Deaf people.

And then there's Bummy's work as a certified parliamentarian, the multimedia guides he's created, and the workshops he's delivered . . . all bringing a welcome sense of order and civility to meetings.

He is the first Deaf person to set up a fully-endowed $1 million chair at Gallaudet University—a leadership chair, of course.

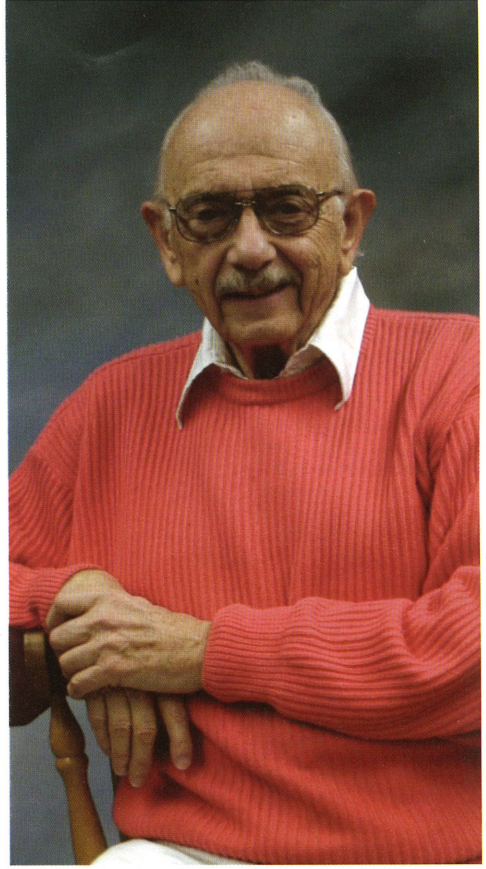
I've had the pleasure of meeting Bummy several times, and wish that all of our readers could do likewise. It's a joy to know him. When we're in Bummy's presence, we know we're with a great leader, an accomplished professional, and a magnificent personality, too. To say nothing of his wit and humor, or his splendid loyalty to the Dodgers!

Matthew Moore

Deaf Life CHART

Our cover story

There's only one Bummy in the Deaf community—and what a story! Last Fall, Gallaudet University renamed its Leadership Institute in his honor. This past February, he presided at the opening of the Bummy Student Center at CSDR, which is designed to inspire and promote leadership among the students. **30**



Cover photo: Hon Siu
Above: Chun Louie/GU

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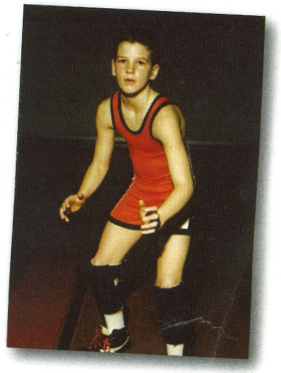

Matt Hamill is a Mixed Martial Arts champion. His bouts in the octagon have been well-publicized, he has a growing cadre of fans, and there's a fact-based movie coming up.

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Deaf Life

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Soaring Eagles

Congratulations to Eagle Scout Brian Hertneky for his accomplishments!

I have enjoyed reading about the many deaf Eagle Scouts.

My son, Matthew Robertson, became an Eagle Scout with Troop 555, Kokomo, Indiana, in February 2006. Matthew attended ISD for 2 years of elementary school. He graduated from Kokomo High School with honors in June 2006.

Matthew is now a 4th-year student at RIT studying applied mathematics.

Susan Robertson
Kokomo, Indiana

The Editors reply: *Ever since we published that cover story, we've been finding more and more Deaf Eagles. Congratulations to you and Matthew!*

As long as we're on the subject, here's a vintage photo of an Eagle Scout who went on to have a most distinguished career (or several careers)—Gerald "Bummy" Burstein. Bummy's standing, wearing his Order of the Arrow sash; his younger brother Stephen squats in front.

Bummy enteredcScoutimng at P.S. 47, in a troop of deaf and hard-of-hearing boys, then continued his involvement at Strubenmuller High School.

Left: DEAF LIFE's August 2009 cover. **Below:** Photo courtesy of Bummy Burstein.

FOR HEARING PEOPLE ONLY

What are some of the favorite anti-Deaf fallacies, and how do we refute them?

Last October, we began listing the most common misperceptions, myths, and distortions of truth employed by "implant evangelists"—hearing parents who have not only chosen to give their deaf children implants, but have a rejectionist attitude towards ASL and contempt for the Deaf community. These extremists cleverly utilize multimedia (newspapers, blogs, Websites, and YouTube, for example) to promote their agenda.

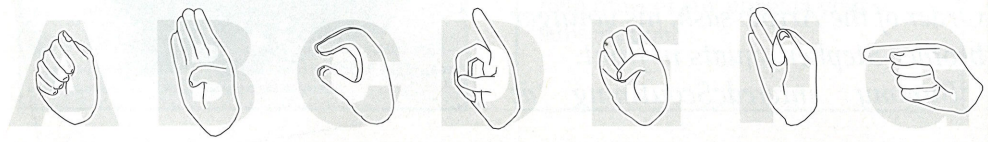
As noted in last month's installment, one of their goals to is silence their Deaf critics—by dismissing them as foolish and irrelevant—relics of a dying minority-fringe culture.

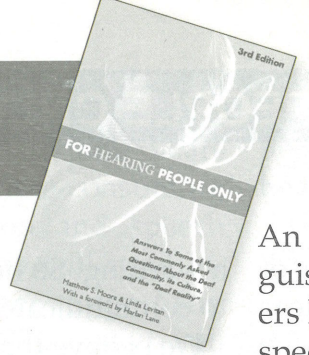
*It should be noted that the extremists do not represent the majority of "CI parents," a number of whom have made positive connections with the Deaf community, and have made ASL part of their lives. While it's possible to have civil dialogue with many CI parents, it's virtually impossible to have any with the CI evangelists. They are absolutely immovable in their belief that their way is the not only the **best** way, but the **only** way to go. We intend to refute them with the facts. We will not be silenced.*

Accordingly, our series continues.

Implants are a biotechnological miracle.

Those who use terms like "miracle," "a gift from God," "the gift of hearing," and "the right to hear" to describe CIs tend to be parents of children with implants, CI propagandists, or reporters who don't go beyond the superficialities, not the implant users





(part 6)

themselves. One person's "miracle" can be another's calamity.

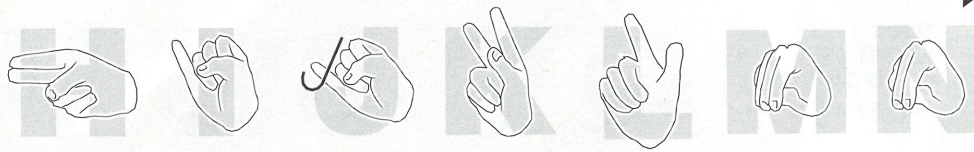
Today's implants may be more technologically sophisticated than the earliest single-channel models, but are hardly miracle machines. The technology is still imperfect. It has pretty much "plateaued," and we don't expect to see any spectacular advances anytime soon.

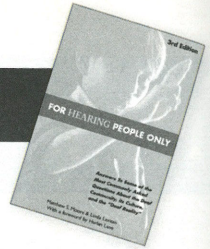
There are some 16,000 microscopic cilia (a.k.a. "hair cells") in the basilar membrane of the normal cochlea. These convey a wide spectrum of sounds at different frequencies, an infinite variety of tonal colors and shadings. The most advanced implants currently have a maximum of 26 channels. That's hardly a level that even *begins* to approach the range of delicacy and subtlety of the biological capacity for distinguishing thousands of sounds. An implant can help to distinguish some sounds (and some users have reported excellent wide-spectrum results), but it is not anywhere near an approximation of real hearing. CIs do *not* restore hearing. As Deaf Community advocate Tami Hossler (a hearing mother of a deaf child) has pointed out, even CI professionals, those who work directly with implantees, if they're honest, will say as much, as do the NIH and CDC. To claim otherwise—that CIs restore hearing—is a falsehood.

The CI does not provide anywhere near an approximation of real hearing; the technology is, and will remain, imperfect.

There is no reliable way to predict how well a deaf child will function with an implant. Nor do we know the long-term physical effects of implantation.

Cochlear implants do *not* re-





store a fully functional sense of hearing. A person with a cochlear implant is *still* deaf.

Cochlear implants enable deaf children to function fully within the hearing world. They don't need or desire ASL.

It is simply untrue that children with CIs have no need for sign language. Think about this real-life scenario: supposing your little Jasmine or Ryan goes to the beach, and removes the external components (the microphone, speech processor, and radio-frequency transducer—the magnetic headpiece) to take a swim. Your child is several hundred yards away, in the surf. You want to say something—convey a message or a warning. So how are you going to communicate?

How accurate is the trouble-free scenario promoted by the implant evangelists?

We believe that *all* deaf children in America have a right to access to ASL. Why should they be denied access to something that benefits them? It's not merely a beautiful language; it's incredibly useful. It has enormous utility. It can save lives. There's never an electronic malfunction, and it never runs out of batteries or gets its memory wiped out by a surge of static electricity.

Furthermore, ASL enables its users to communicate with Deaf people. Knowledge of ASL opens the gate to the riches of Deaf culture: ASL poetry, folklore, theater, storytelling, humor, and video literature. Even if their languages are mutually unintelligible, Deaf people from other countries find it easier to establish communication with fluent ASL signers, and *vice versa*.

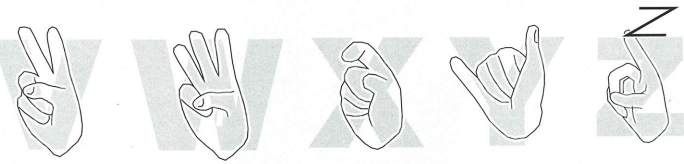
It is also untrue that all deaf children with implants are able to function normally as hearing. Many implantees require years of costly and time-consuming aural rehabilitation and speech training. They may still need interpreters and other support services in school. They may still have to purchase assistive devices for their classes. All CI users must make periodic visits to their audiologists for mapping (re-programming). The trouble-free scenario described by implant evangelists—surgery, AVT during the preschool years, then full mainstreaming without any support services needed, *voilà*, success!—doesn't apply to all children, quite possibly not even the majority. It's another example of false and misleading promises.

And what about those who don't acquire good spoken language ***or*** have signing—and whose parents remain adamantly opposed to signing? These children are effectively stuck between languages. They are language-deprived—thanks to the "authorities" and the extremists.

The CI industry only has our best interests, as families, at heart.

The implant industry is profit-driven and competitive, and is not necessarily an ethical enterprise. Parents should look beyond the CI cheesecake and educate themselves about the downside—including the Cochlear Corporation's kickback scandal and Advanced Bionics' recall of its defective iClarion HiRes implants. Let's also remind them of the many CI users who have not had trouble-free experiences.

And let's ask this question: what has the CI industry done—*really* done—for the Deaf community? It has generated enormous profits off deaf children, of which not a penny goes back to the Deaf community. It's money that could be used to improve deaf children's and adults' literacy. Money that could be used to enhance the libraries, multimedia labs, arts programs, and other resources of financially-pinched state, private, and charter schools for the deaf. But it won't be. ■



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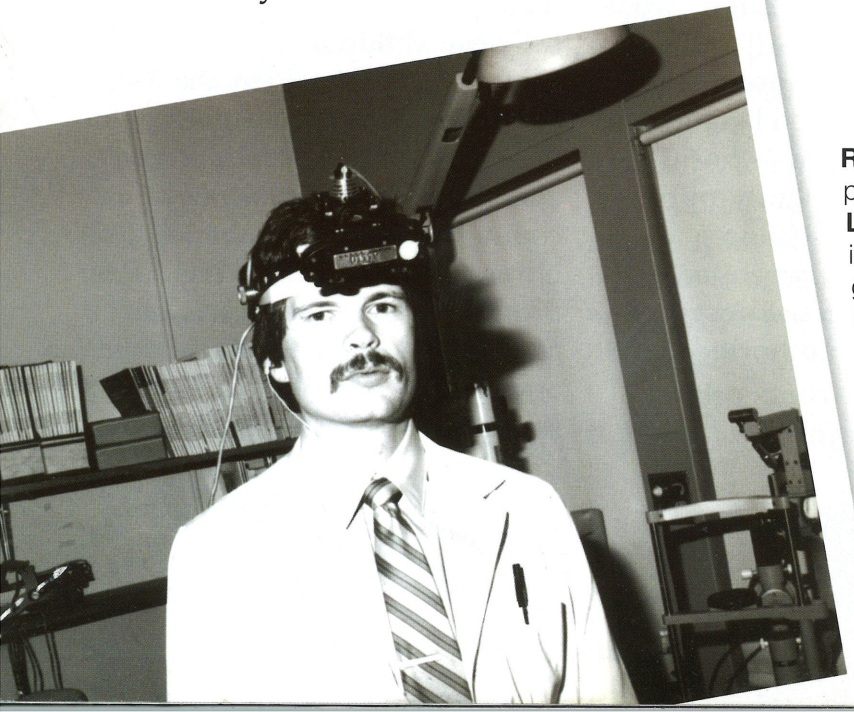
Dr. Andrew Baker

A pioneering vision specialist celebrates 25 years in the field

Dr. Andrew Baker is a 1979 graduate of NTID/RIT (National Technical Institute for the Deaf/Rochester Institute of Technology) and a 1983 graduate of the New England College of Optometry in Boston. He's celebrating his 25th anniversary as a staff optometrist of the Department of Ophthalmology at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. He specializes in providing vision-care services to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community.



Right: a contemporary photo. **Left:** Dr. Baker in 1982, before graduating from New England College of Optometry.

He says, "It has been an extremely rewarding, enriching, and unique experience. We've seen deaf people from all walks of life, including those from Venezuela, Iran, Cape Verde, Greece, and Pakistan, and many of them present with unique profiles. They have much to teach us, benefiting the staff, residents, and fellows at Mass. Eye and Ear. My most rewarding experiences are watching one-year-old deaf children signing!"

Andrew Baker was born profoundly deaf due to Rh blood incompatibility. No one else in his family was deaf. He attended public schools before entering NTID. At NTID, he noticed many deaf students with vision problems, which inspired him to enroll in optometry school to learn more about vision and deafness. Upon graduation, he learned that he was the world's first deaf optometrist. At a 1985 convention, he met a deaf ophthalmologist from Germany, specializing in ultrasound. Otherwise, he does not know of any other deaf eye-care specialist. He is always encouraging young deaf students to pursue ophthalmology and other health-related fields, but reminds them that being a physician can be very challenging and requires strong verbal skills.

Dr. Baker has a specialty in identifying Oculo-Auditory Syndromes, which are sometimes useful in identifying causes of some congenital deafness, especially Usher's Syndrome. Patients with such syndromes, which also include Waardenburg Syndrome, Konigsmark Syndrome, and Rubella Syndrome, often present with ocular and auditory findings.* He contributed the chapter "Vision and Deafness" to the 2000 edition of **Principles and Practice of Ophthalmology** (Volume 6, Chapter 393).

Since 45 percent of congenitally deaf people have an eye problem, compared to 10 percent of those born with normal hearing, early diagnosis and identification of the syndromes can help with genetic and career planning.

One of his scariest stories involves two drunk drivers with Usher's Syndrome. "In my experience servicing deaf peoples' eyes, I happened to come across two cases of adults with Usher's Syndrome. They were deaf, and had a very limited central field of view due to *retinitis pigmentosa*. They could read the letters at the Registry of Motor Vehicles, but the Registry does not test their visual fields, so they could get away with getting a driver's license. However, [these two cases] involved their being intoxicated and driving! They were not safe drivers, and people got hurt."

What progress is being made in treating RP? "The best treatment plan of choice is dietary. It was recently discovered that eating two servings of oily fish per week, along with dark-green leafy vegetables, and taking 14,000 units of Vitamin A palmitate, could slow down the rate of degeneration

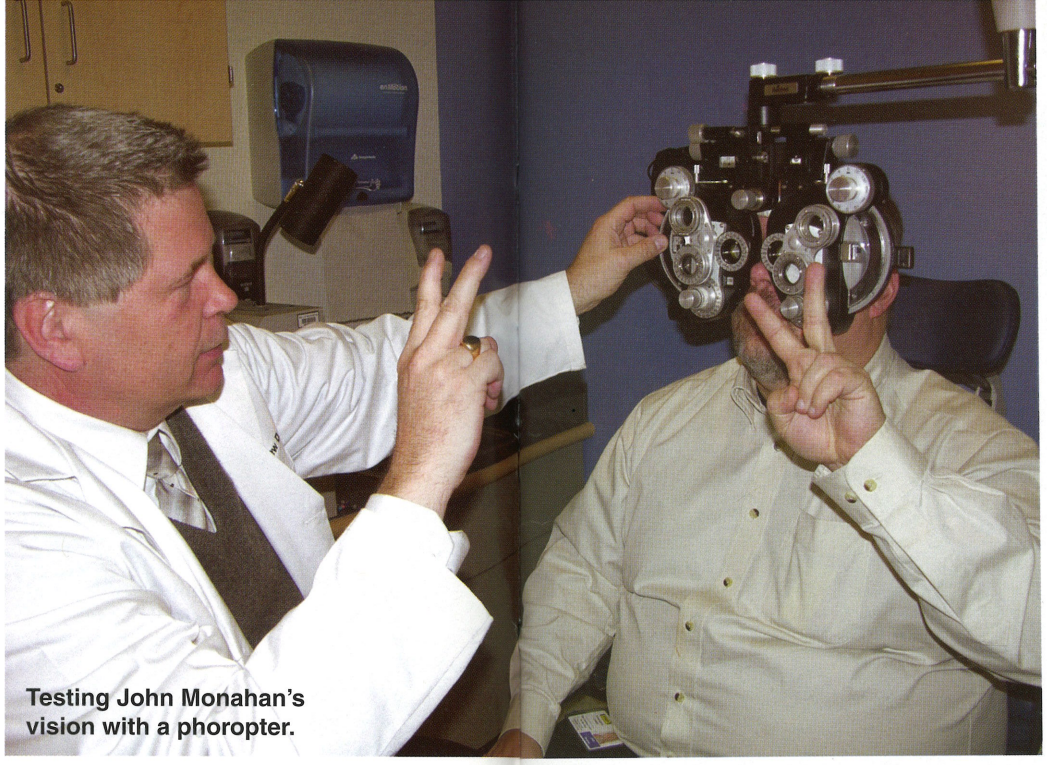
Doing a slit-lamp examination with John Monahan, ASL Specialist and Driver Education Teacher at The Learning Center for Deaf Children in Framingham.

"My most rewarding experiences are watching one-year-old deaf children signing!"

from 9% per year to 3% per year, allowing the patient to retain useful vision to age 79, rather than 59. Eating right is very important!

"In the meantime, much research continues to be done with understanding the biology of *retinitis pigmentosa.* It's not an inflammatory process *per se*, but a defect in the biological mechanism, much like running an old engine with loose valves and seals, and emitting lots of smoke. Genetic counseling is also highly recommended.

"Vision-rehabilitation programs and social services are excellent resources. With vision rehab, patients can learn about a variety of vision-aid devices, and social services can provide counseling and [further] resourcing.



Testing John Monahan's vision with a phoropter.

"Ultimately, it's up to the patient to be their own best advocate. Most people are unaware of the limitations imposed by their condition, but it's up to the patient to educate them.

"Which brings me to the next point: all deaf people have an inherent responsibility to advocate on their own for not only their best interests, but for the best interests of everyone. If someone is talking to me without facing me, it's up to me to advise them to please look directly at me while speaking, and not bobble their heads!

"These are some of the points I teach the physicians at Mass. Eye and Ear, and by learning the points, the physicians find themselves using the same strategy with all of their patients. It's part of Mass. Eye and Ear's ongoing commitment to providing excellence in medical care, and providing it with compassion."

Of course, communication is of utmost importance in conducting eye exams. Many deaf people have reported difficulty in communicating with their doctors and express relief in being able to communicate with a doctor who signs and understands them. Physicians at Mass. Eye and Ear are welcome to observe Dr. Baker's clinical sessions with his patients, which can enhance their understanding of communication techniques, in turn helping them to communicate with a broader array of patients.

"I'm very grateful for the support and guidance the Mass. Eye and Ear has provided all these years. As I enter my golden years, I hope to continue being active in patient care, and devote more time to research, writing, and teaching about the experience I have gained here." ■

It's up to the patient to be their own best advocate.

* Usher, Waardenburg, Konigsmark, and Rubella syndromes are hereditary conditions. Patients are born deaf and also cope with a variety of genetically-linked vision problems, ranging from mild to severe. Usher's, the best known, involves progressive loss of vision due to abnormal buildup of pigment in the retina (*retinitis pigmentosa*). Persons with these syndromes can live full, rich, rewarding lives.

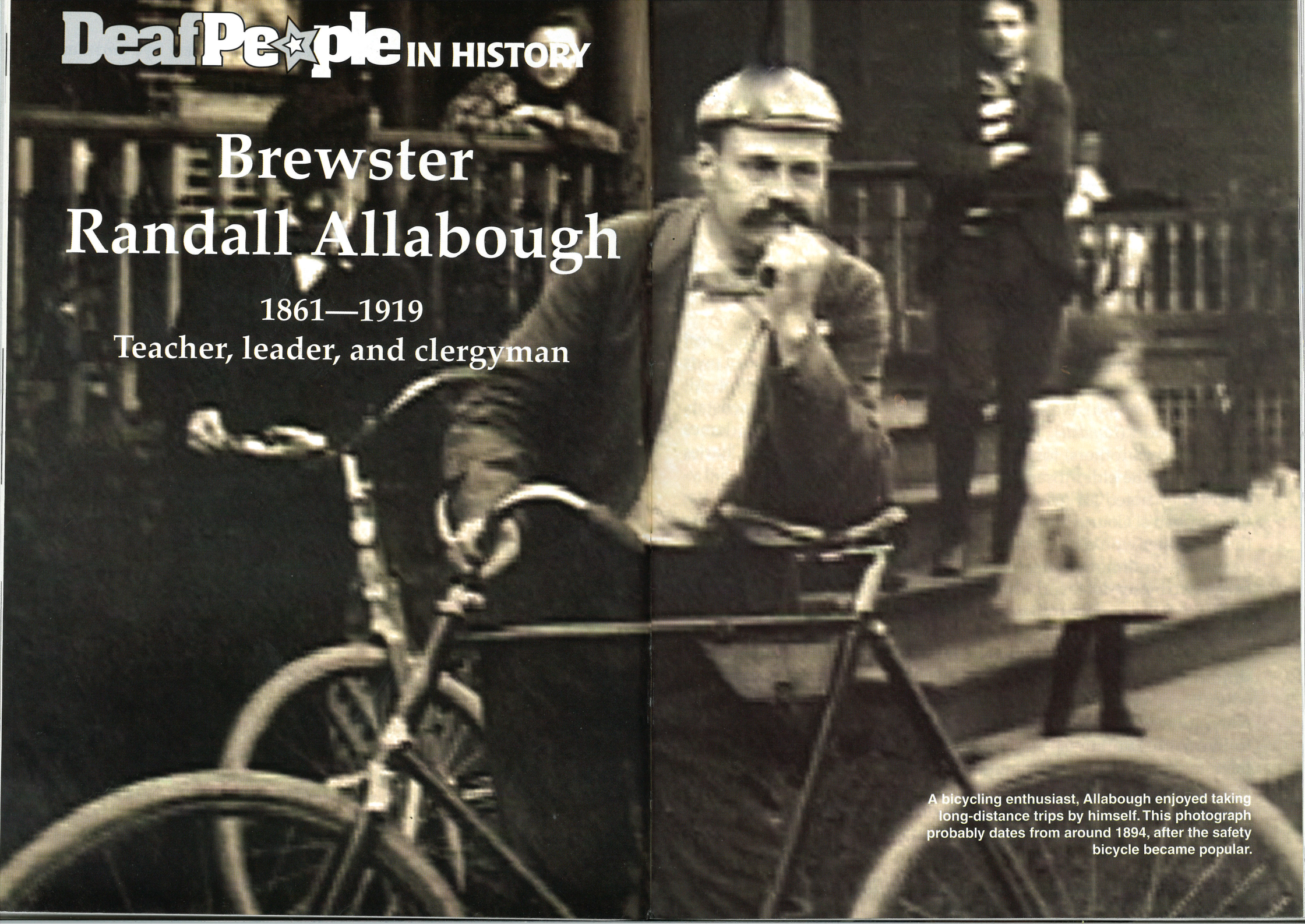
Deaf Life Photos courtesy of Dr. Baker/ Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. For more information: www.masseyeandear.org

Deaf People IN HISTORY

Brewster Randall Allabough

1861—1919

Teacher, leader, and clergyman



A bicycling enthusiast, Allabough enjoyed taking long-distance trips by himself. This photograph probably dates from around 1894, after the safety bicycle became popular.

A hundred years ago, Brewster Randall Allabough was one of the best-known men in the Pennsylvania and national Deaf communities. His portly figure and sweeping mustache made him an immediately recognizable figure. Teacher, leader, Episcopal priest, he was noted for the substance of his signed oratory and the force and elegance of his delivery.

He was a native of Norristown in southeastern Pennsylvania. Born on March 18, 1861 to Louise and Joseph L. Allabough, he was of sturdy German stock on his father's side (*Allebach*), Welsh on his mother's side (*Randall*). He had two younger brothers, Joseph, Jr. and David. The elder Joseph was an attorney noted for his work in the Orphan's Court, and hoped that Brewster would also become a lawyer—until he was deafened at age two by scarlet fever, whereupon the father gave up all grand ambitions for him. There followed several fruitless attempts to restore his hearing, but no formal education on record. Louise died when he was 9, and he was sent to live with two aunts, working their farm and gaining strength and endurance.

When he was 13, he was enrolled in the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, at its old location at Broad and Pine Streets in Philadelphia. (The attractive Greek Revival building is now Hamilton Hall of the University of the Arts.) After graduating in 1879, he entered Gallaudet College. Together with several other future leaders of the Deaf community, such as James Lewis Smith, Thomas Francis Fox, Albert F. Adams, Philip J. Hasenstab, Samuel Gaston Davidson, James H. Cloud, Olof Hanson, Charles Orvis Dantzer, and Robert S. Lyons, Allabough participated actively in varsity sports. He was a standout player on Gallaudet's first football squad (1883), and managed the team. He received his B.A. in 1884.

During his sophomore year, his father died, so he had to plan his own future himself. According to longtime colleague James S. Reider, who chronicled his career in **The Silent Worker,** "he entered the Bryant and Stratton Business College in Philadelphia," and then "secured a responsible position with the Globe and Liverpool and London Insurance Company as register clerk, in New York." He joined the Empire State Association of the Deaf, helping to raise funds for a memorial to Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet.

In 1886, offered the position of Boys' Supervisor at the Western Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf in Edgewood, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Allabough joined the staff and became a teacher there. WPSD, the nation's first day school for the deaf, experienced such rapid growth that residential arrangements soon became necessary.

"In a few weeks, he organized 10 new chapters."

One of Allabough's fellow teachers and political colleagues was George Moredock Teegarden, who put in a 48-year career at WPSD, but is best known as a writer of children's tales.

At WPSD, while still Boys' Supervisor, he mentored Agatha Tiegel, who became the school's first alumna to enroll in Gallaudet College. (She became valedictorian of the Class of 1893 and later married architect, leader, and minister Olof Hanson.) As Augusta K. Barrett wrote in **The Silent Worker**: "There was then no class preparing for Gallaudet College, and she received all necessary instruction through [his] kindness. It was a kindness which she feels she can never repay him. All his instruction and her studies for college were conducted outside of regular school hours."

At WPSD, Allabough lived an active life. He enjoyed rabbit hunting and bicycling, taking long cycle trips when he could.

In December 1899, a fire destroyed WPSD's main building and caused drastic layoffs of staff as the school struggled to rebuild, but Allabough was urgently requested to return, and resumed his teaching. The school reopened in new buildings in 1902.

Actively involved with the Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of the Deaf—a notably well-organized, bustling state organization—from its founding in 1881, Allabough served as Manager, Treasurer, First and Second Vice-President, and President. (He can be considered a

co-founder.) He worked with PSAD founder Robert Middleton Ziegler, George M. Teegarden, Archibald Woodside, and several other indomitable advocates. After PSAD's treasury books were lost in the WPSD fire, Allabough presented PSAD with "a complete new set." Dissatisfied that there were only four PSAD chapters in the state, he set out to increase the number. During one especially energetic 24-day summer stretch, he helped organize new chapters in Johnstown, Altoona, Beaver Valley, Erie, York, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Reading, Allentown, and Scranton, paying his own travel expenses, as he didn't want to use PSAD funds. He took a leading role in the campaign to establish a Home for Aged and Infirm Deaf in Doylestown, fundraising and outreach. The Home was dedicated in 1902. Within six years the mortgage was paid off.

Allabough served on several NAD committees, and was President of the Gallaudet College Alumni Association. He was a polished writer, having graduated from the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle course, contributed to the **American Annals of the Deaf**, and edited **The Unity**, the newsletter of St. Margaret's Mission to the Deaf.

On June 30, 1902, he married Lily Annabel Bicksler DeLong (1869-1909). Compared to her well-publicized husband, she is a relatively obscure figure; very little was written about her. An alumna of PIDD like her husband, she was a charter member of the women's literary society at Gallaudet College, the O.W.L.S. (now Phi Kappa Zeta Sorority), which had been co-founded by Agatha Tiegel. She earned her B.A. in 1894, valedictorian of her class. Shortly after graduating, she married Harvey DeLong (GC '93), who taught at the Virginia School in Staunton. He died in 1897, following an operation for appendicitis, and Lily returned to Pennsylvania with a son who died around three years later.

Allabough had a new house built in nearby Wilkinsburg, which he deeded to Lily as a wedding present. They had three children: Brewster, Jr., who died in infancy, Helen, and David. Reider described Lily as "a favorite wherever she went, greatly admired, as well as loved." She was actively involved in St. Margaret's Mission, PSAD, and the Home fundraising campaign. Their marriage was happy, but all too brief.

After a three-year bout with cancer, Lily Allabough died on May 9, 1909, age 40—so uncomplaining that her friends didn't even know that she was terminally ill, and were stunned by news of her death. According to Rev. Dantzer, Pastor of All Souls' Church for the Deaf in Philadelphia, "Her last work was making a number of articles for the Bazaar held in Germantown, Philadelphia, only last April." She had hoped to live to see her husband's ordination, but that wish was unfulfilled.

"He continued his church work to his last moment."

Allabough was ordained as Deacon on May 20, 1910, at St. Stephen's Church in Wilkinsburg, the thirteenth Deaf man taking Holy Orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church. A few days previously, Gallaudet College had conferred on him an honorary Master of Arts degree. He continued teaching at WPSD.

His religious mentor was Austin Ward Mann, another pioneering Deaf Episcopal priest who founded 11 missions to the deaf and was active in the Midwest, based in Cleveland, Ohio. After Mann died suddenly in January 1911, Allabough, who was seen as Mann's successor, resigned his teaching position at WPSD, as noted by Rev. Dantzer, "to take up the burden of the mission-

ary work among the deaf in the Middle West." That October, he remarried—to Mrs. Nellie Pierce Pyle (GC '99). And on December 24, he was ordained an Episcopal Priest at Calvary Church in Pittsburgh. The following March, he bade farewell to his many friends in Pennsylvania and departed for Cleveland. He was now General Missionary of the Mid-Western Deaf-Mute Mission.

He revisited Pittsburgh as often as he could, and, in 1912, founded a new mission for the deaf—St. Philip's—in Beaver Falls, 40 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. In 1916, as a result of the Church's reorganization, he was compelled to relinquish his missionary work in Pennsylvania entirely. Rev. Franklin C. Smielau, transferred from Western New York, took charge of the flourishing Pittsburgh mission.

Rev. Allabough continued his work up to the moment of his death on May 19, 1919. It came suddenly—ironically, much like Rev. Mann's. After conducting a church service in Middletown, Ohio, he was on his way to the train station to return home to Cleveland, walking with some friends, when he collapsed—victim of a heart attack. He was 58, and apparently in robust health. His death shocked the community. Reider eulogized him thus:

> By his death a good and useful career that gave promise of still greater usefulness was cut short. As a leader of the deaf, he was second to none. In personality, he was magnetic; he made friends quickly and his followers were many, and no one was too humble or too illiterate to receive a kindly word of encouragement from him. He served his fellow-deaf in different ways and his was truly a life of service for them. His loss, therefore, is more than that of a mere friend. . . . Long shall we mourn the passing away of this faithful servant and friend.

He was buried in Montgomery Cemetery in Norristown, overlooking the Schuylkill River, next to Lily and Brewster, Jr.

The Home for Aged and Infirm Deaf, vastly changed and renamed since its founding, is now part of the Elwyn Institute's Deaf Services. PSD, WPSD, PSAD, NAD, the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, still endure. ■

DeafLife Photos courtesy of Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf; thanks to Vicki Cherney of WPSD and Harry G. Lang.

DeafTrivia
fun & forgotten facts

ALPHABET SOUP

What's DCARA?

For answers, visit www.DeafTrivia.com!

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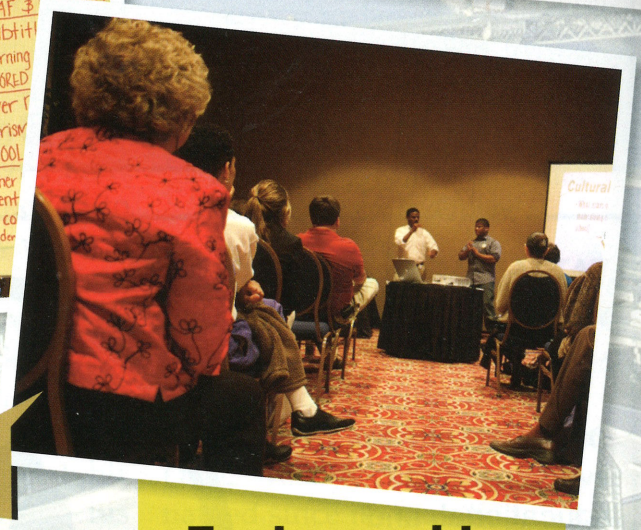
Our portal site for everyone. Fun, educational, and enlightening features. Check out our new DeafPeople.com galleries! We'll continue to expand, improve, and update our sites—part of our goal of serving the community.

#1 Meet new people

Meet dynamic, highly motivated Deaf leaders, teachers, administrators, advocates, students, and community professionals.



#3 Good prices on rooms and events

Take advantage of discount rates at the DoubleTree-Lloyd Center Hotel, with comfortable, modern accommodations and a convenient location near the Oregon Convention Center and on the MAX light-rail/ Vintage Trolley line.

4 Reasons why you should go!

#2 Exchange ideas

Network, exchange ideas, discuss new approaches in teaching and curriculum, leadership training, empowerment, literacy, advocacy, arts, counseling and guidance, and community services.

#4 Portland—a beautiful city

If you've ever wanted to see Mount Hood and Mount St. Helens, now you can! Portland is one of America's "greenest" cities, with beautiful parks and botanical gardens, museums, and great shopping.

Deadline: April 1, 2010
www.deafpeopleofcolor.org

Deaf Almanac

March

Dates to remember from our Deaf History

3 1993

Nicolas Philibert's acclaimed documentary ***Le Pays des Sourds*** **(*In the Land of the Deaf*)** was officially released in France. It was released in the U.S.A. on September 14, 1994. It takes an unsparingly honest look at Deaf-Hearing family relationships, education, social prejudice, communication and miscommunication, and artistry—with Deaf people, fluently signing FSL, talking directly to the viewer about their lives, frustrations, and hopes.

6 1943

Gallaudet College's Blue Bisons, in last place, defeated three higher-ranked college teams to win the Mason-Dixon Basketball Championship. The five Bisons who played in all three games—Paul Baldridge, Roy Kay Holcomb, Don Padden, Earl Roberts, and Hal Weingold—became known as the "Five Iron Men," immortalized in Deaf-sports lore and legend.

6 1988

The "Deaf President Now!" movement at Gallaudet University sent shockwaves through the international Deaf community and had repercussions in the Hearing community as well. It certainly provided a tremendous incentive for the planning and organizing of the first DEAF WAY International Conference and Festival of July 1989, and is believed to have spurred the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Its greatest legacy, perhaps, was putting the concepts of Deaf empowerment and unity into action.

23 1925

Lawrence R. Newman attended Lexington and Fanwood, graduating from Gallaudet College in 1948. He taught mathematics at CSDR, being named California Teacher of the Year in 1969. He was appointed principal of Taft Aurally Handicapped School in Santa Ana in 1974, and in 1978, appointed CSDR's Assistant Superintendent. He was NAD President 1986-1990. **Sands of Time: NAD Presidents 1880-2003**, was published in 2006; **I Fill This Small Space: The Writings of a Deaf Activist** in 2009.

24 1833

Philip Goode Gillett (d. 10/2/1901) taught at Indiana School for the Deaf for four years, and was appointed superintendent of Illinois School for the Deaf in 1856, when he was only 24, a relatively inexperienced teacher. He headed ISD until his retirement in 1893, putting in a distinguished career. Although president of the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf (AAPTSD—today's Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf), he supported the use of fingerspelling and sign language. He even recommended that fingerspelling be taught in the state's public schools—a proposal that was far ahead of its time. Another one of his innovations was hiring women as teachers—a revolutionary notion at the time!

Major sources: Jack R. Gannon, **Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America** (1980); John Vickrey Van Cleve and Barry A. Crouch, **A Place of Their Own: Creating the Deaf Community in America** (1989); Mabs Holcomb and Sharon Wood, **Deaf Women: a Parade through the Decades** (1989); Harry G. Lang, **Silence of the Spheres: the Deaf Experience in the History of Science** (1994); Harry G. Lang and Bonnie Meath-Lang, **Deaf Persons in the Arts and Sciences: a Biographical Dictionary** (1995); Matthew S. Moore and Robert F. Panara, **Great Deaf Americans: the Second Edition** (1996); Deborah Meranski Sonnenstrahl, **Deaf Artists in America: Colonial to Contemporary** (2002). **Photo credits:** Nicolas Philibert—International Film Circuit. Five Iron Men —Gallaudet University Archives. Lawrence R. Newman—Mr. Newman. Philip Gillett—Indiana School for the Deaf.

Bummy Burstein

Celebrating a one-of-a-kind exemplar

Wielding a mammoth pair of scissors, and with a little help from Career Technology Education teachers Mike Anderson and Bill Mather (who, together with their students, got the Center into shape), Bummy opens CSDR's new Student Center on February 4. Superintendent Mal Grossinger is at left.

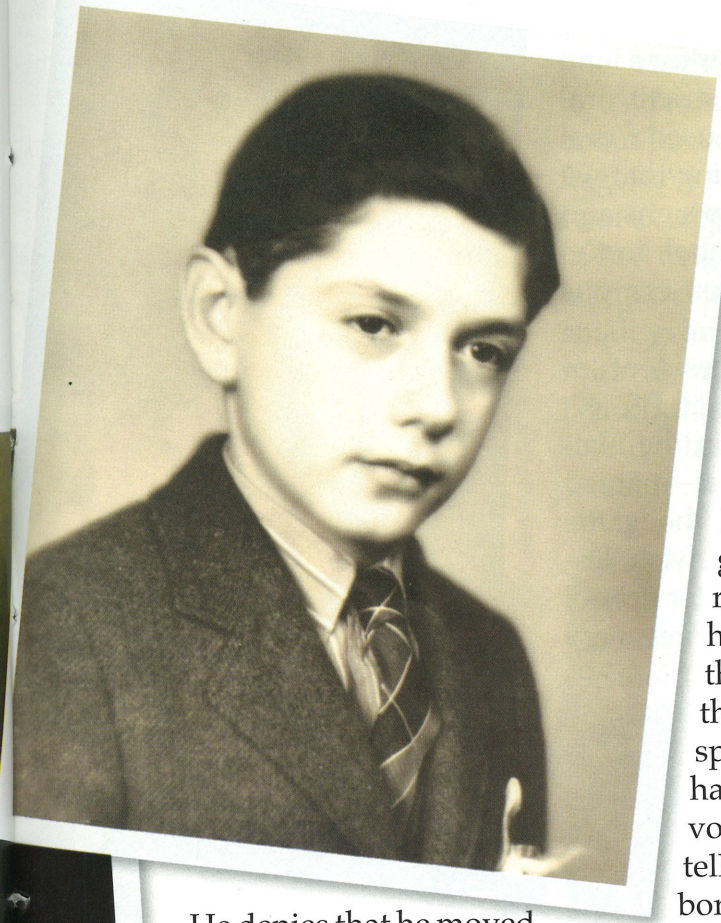
© Hon Siu

Above: An early studio portrait.
Below: Holding still: a later portrait.
Right: At a ge 7.

He is known everywhere as Bummy Burstein. Or simply Bummy.

Often asked how he got such an unusual nickname, he explained in 1994: "My official name is Gerald Burstein. I do not have a middle name. 'Bummy' stemmed from my loyalty to my hometown major-league baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers. When I first entered Gallaudet in the Fall of 1947, the Dodgers were playing in the World Series. Amazing, isn't it! The Dodgers were well-known for playing lousy ballgames and for losing too many games, too; so they were called 'Dem Bums.' Well, I was rooting hard for the Dodgers with a large gathering around a radio (no TV at the time) with a hard-of-hearing student interpreting the games play by play. Of course, the Dodgers lost the World Series that year, but I had rooted so hard for them that my friends at Gallaudet anointed me with the name 'Bummy.' That name has stuck with me ever since."[1]

Nobody calls Mr. Burstein "Gerald." He is, and will always be, Bummy.



He denies that he moved to Los Angeles to be close to his beloved Dodgers, but he's still their fan. (Nobody calls the Dodgers "Bums" anymore. Whether the Minneapolis Lakers moved to Los Angeles so Bummy could continue to root for *them* too is debatable.)

Born profoundly deaf (but big and healthy) in 1926, Bummy grew up in Depression-era Brooklyn in a close and supportive Jewish family. His parents were hearing. No one else in the family was deaf.

"I was brought up in an oral environment; no signing was permitted in the home or anywhere. My parents never learned sign language. I was lucky to read lips very well and have good speech for those who work with the deaf, fairly good speech for those who have never met me. My voice is monotonous. I tell everybody that I was born with that talent for reading lips, like one who plays violin or piano expertly. My brother, Stephen David, can fingerspell and is easy to communicate with. He knows a little sign. He's a neurosurgeon in Long Island, and was a team physician for the USA World Games for the Deaf team in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1969.

"I attended P.S. 47 for the Deaf in Manhattan. Every school day, I would get up early in the morn-

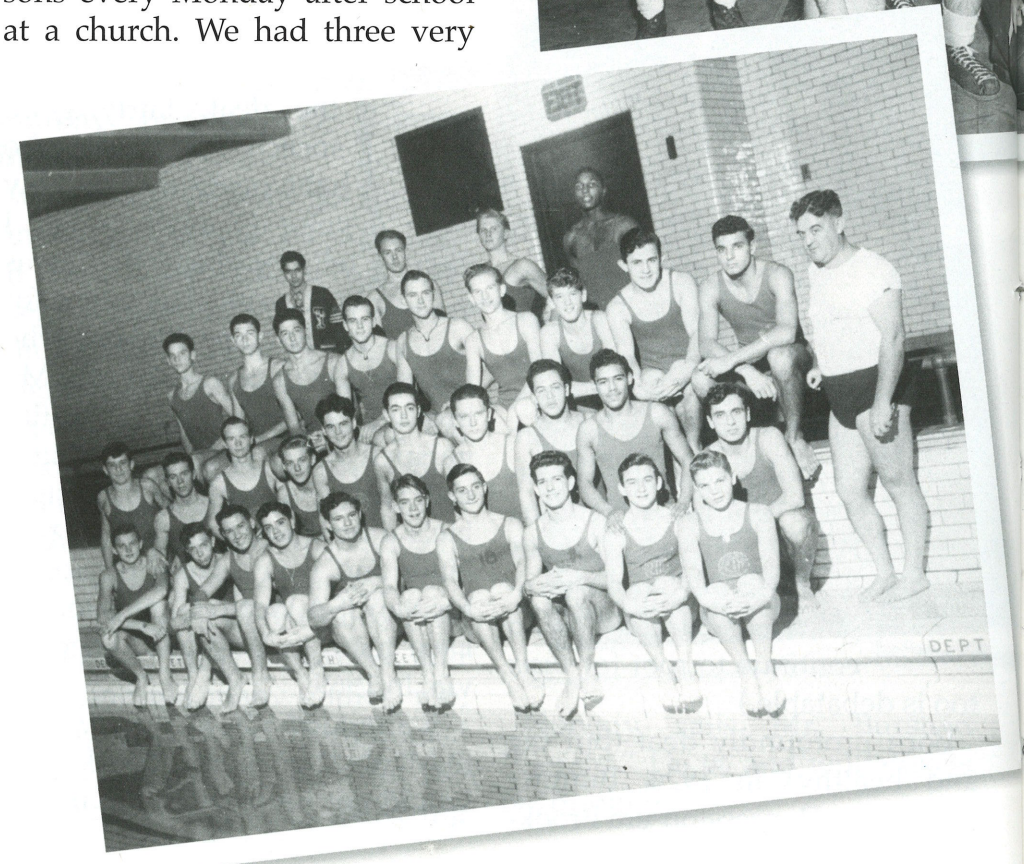
ing to catch a school bus for a long ride to school. It was a strictly oral program. Natch, we used "oral sign language," meaning that we used a mix of made-up signs and proper signs, after school, in the subway, and in our off-campus socials.

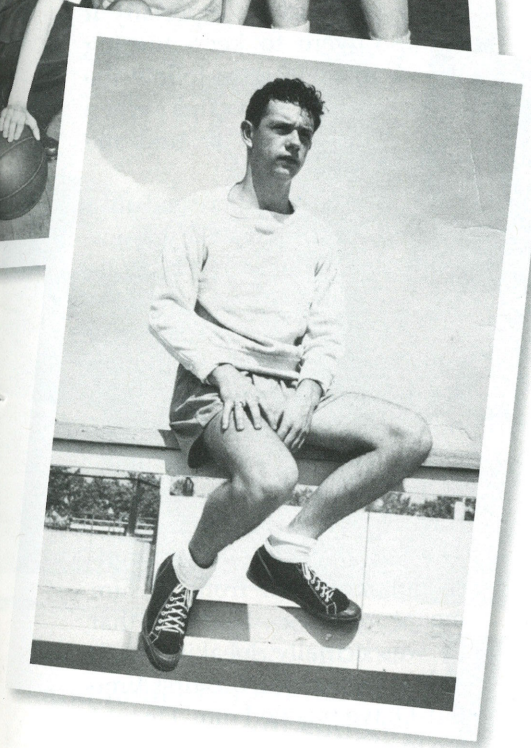
"My father was president of the PTA a few terms at P.S. 47. We were both active in the Naismith Club for the deaf—named after the inventor of the game of basketball. I had Jewish lessons every Monday after school at a church. We had three very fine teachers who volunteered to teach us. There I learned a lot about Jewish history, culture, heritage, and some Hebrew. I also attended regular Sunday classes in my neighborhood temple and learned Hebrew and history. A small group of us had [our] bar mitzvah at Temple Emanu-El, a beautiful [synagogue], one of the world's largest Jewish houses of worship, on Fifth Avenue.

"After graduating from 47 (which later became Junior High School 47) in 1943, I entered Strubenmuller High School (now known as Charles Evans High School) and got my New York State Regents diploma. I was a member of a swimming team and Arista (an honor society). I became an Eagle Scout and a member of the Order of the Arrow."

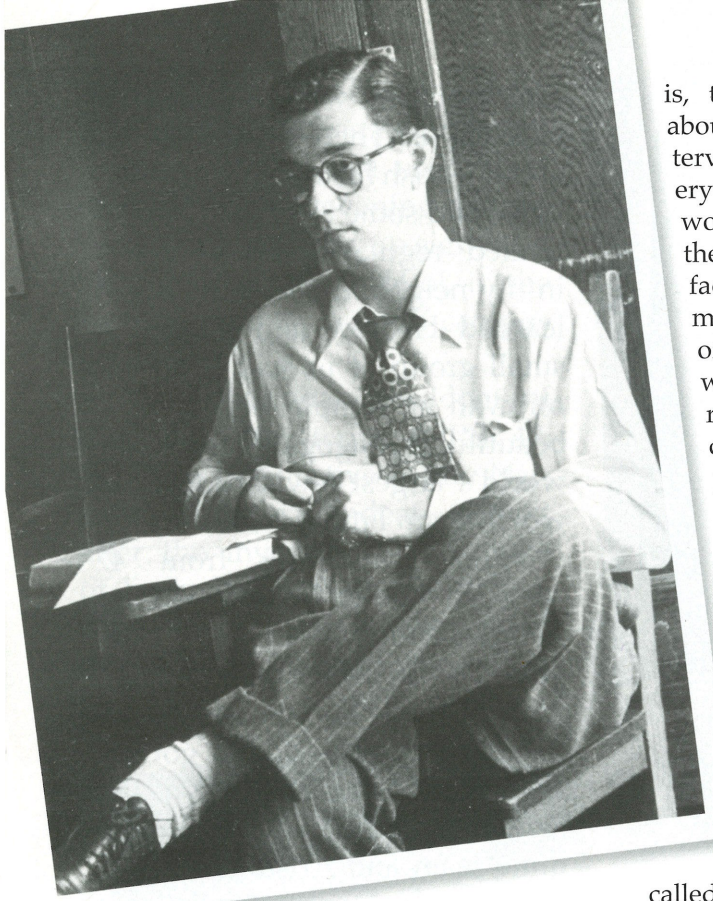
Along the way, he gained plenty of firsthand experience with prejudice against deaf people. As he wrote in a 1965 paper for sociology class at CSUN's Leadership Training Program:

> In my last term in high school, I began thinking about college. I sent applications to some small out-of-town colleges and also took the entrance examination for City College in New York. I





Top: The Naismith Junior Varsity team, 1946-47. Bummy's standing in the center, next to Coach Norman Finkelstein. **Left:** On the Strubenmuller swim team (third row up, second from left). **Above:** At the Washington Baths, Coney Island, a popular gathering place for deaf people on summer weekends, May 1947



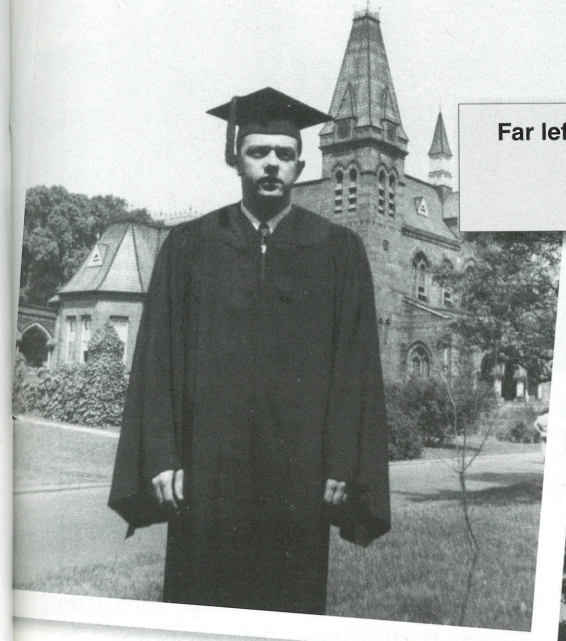
received a letter from Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York, in answer to my application. It explained that the college never had a totally deaf student and how difficult it would be for such a student. It ended as follows: "I have consulted our president, our dean, and a chairman of our Admissions Committee. All three feel that we are not qualified to help a deaf student. I am sorry." This was signed by the registrar.

Another small college, Wagner College, Staten Island, New York, almost accepted me. That is, the registrar who spent about one half-hour in an interview with me told me everything was satisfactory but would like the president of the college to meet me. The fact that I was deaf did not meet with the approval of the president as it did with the registrar and the result was that my application was rejected. The president was afraid that I would disrupt the rest of the class, especially if I were to keep turning in my seat to follow the instructor's lips when he walked around the room.

I was interested in a certain course, podiatry, offered by Long Island University in the City of New York, and called on the dean. Although we seemed to understand each other in the interview, I was asked the following questions: "Can [you] write and can [you] travel by [yourself] to school?" The fact that he had my high-school record in front of him meant nothing. The fact that he was actually speaking with a deaf person for the first time must have puzzled him. He told me to come back after I had satisfactorily completed a year's work in some other college.

"I entered CCNY in 1946, when World War II was over and I was among the sea of veterans attending colleges and universities on the GI Bill of Rights. I had a rough year. It was my father who forced me to go to Gallaudet. He couldn't stand to see me studying into the wee hours of the morning trying to catch up with the veterans. I didn't have interpreters or notetakers. My mother and father helped me a lot and gave me full support. If it was not for my father's decision that I should enroll at Gallaudet, I would not be where I am today.

"When I entered Gallaudet in the fall of 1947, as a sophomore, my signs were still oral-sign-language. At first, I didn't want to go. Those three years at Gallaudet were the best of my life. What struck me was that there were deaf teachers—who signed." He especially enjoyed late-night "bull sessions" in College Hall. "At 11 p.m., room lights went out, but we would hang around in the hall, talking until all hours. I was active in differ-



Far left and below: In class and on campus, Gallaudet College, around 1949-50.
Left: Commencement Day, May 1950.

At CSUN's Leadership Training Program, 1965. Left to right: Herb Larson, Vic Galloway, Bummy, Verne Call (hearing), and Robert Sanderson.

ent organizations at Gallaudet and held various offices there. I majored in Education and graduated in 1950 with a B.A. degree."

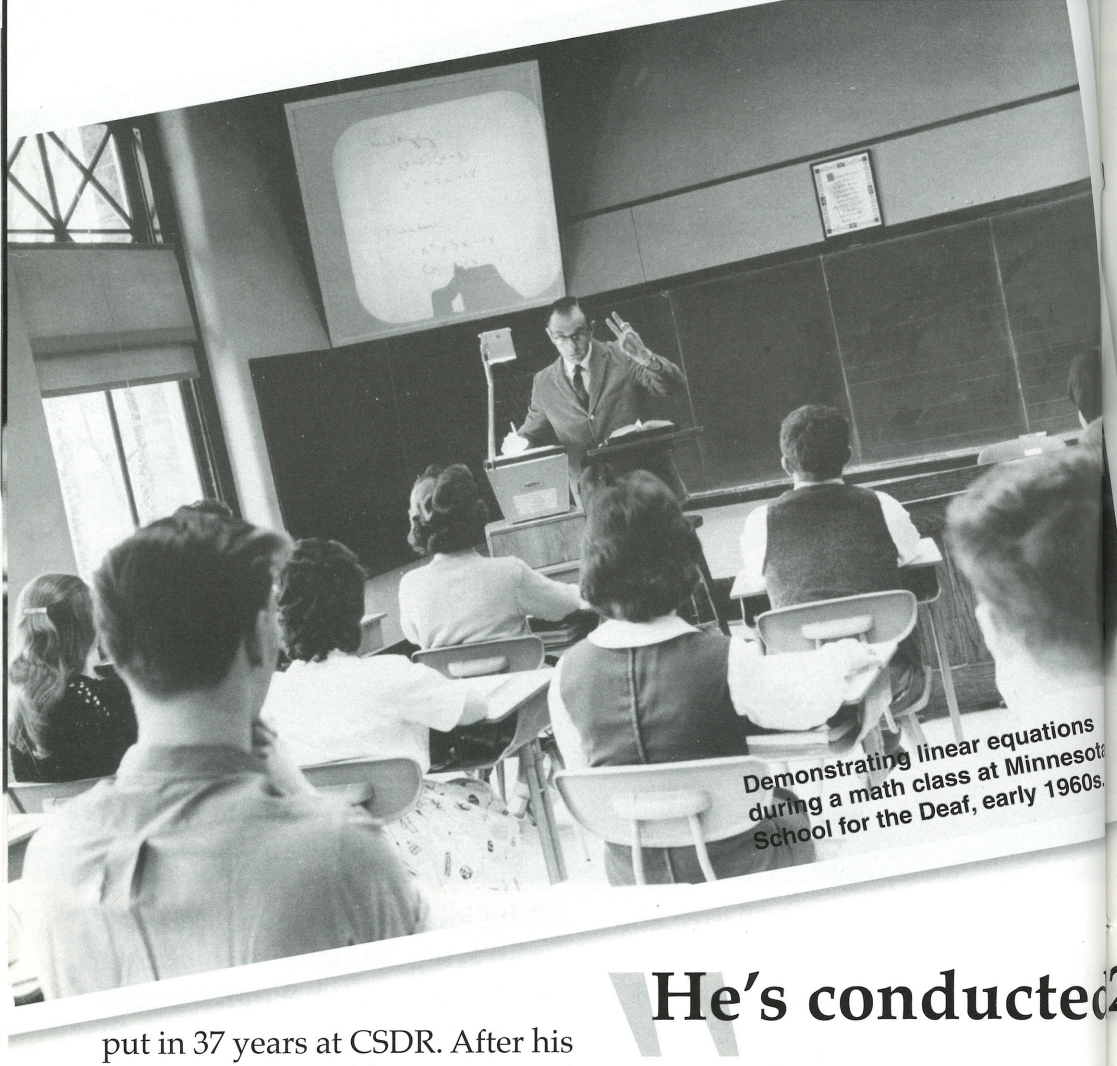
His first professional position was teaching mathematics at Minnesota School for the Deaf. "I have prepared many boys and girls for Gallaudet." He learned to operate a Linotype machine there and joined the International Typographical Union after passing a rigorous examination. Although he continued to encounter anti-deaf prejudice, "with my ITU card my deafness was not considered a handicap and I was accepted on an equal basis with hearing members." He worked at the **New York Times** "for many summers," and "also spent summers traveling and working in different parts of the country, including Alaska."

In Minnesota, he was a registered basketball referee for 10 years, officiating at "small high schools, city leagues, and small Bible colleges. In my free time I learned to fly, an activity that ended soon after I had my solo flight." (After he left Minnesota, he no longer had time for that.)

"After teaching [at MSD] for 15 years, I was accepted into the LTP at CSUN in 1965 for 8 months. I obtained my Master's [in Administration and Supervision] in August 1965 and went to teach at the California School for the Deaf in Riverside."

Bummy taught junior-high mathematics at CSDR for four years. He also taught local continuing-education classes for deaf adults and sign-language classes for hearing students. He served as an adjunct teacher at Riverside Community College, and has taken courses at NYU, Brooklyn College, SFSU, Ball State, University of Massachusetts, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, and the Gallaudet University Regional Center at Ohlone College.

In September 1969, he was appointed Supervisor of Media Technology Services, a position he held with distinction until he retired on May 1, 2002, having



Demonstrating linear equations during a math class at Minnesota School for the Deaf, early 1960s.

put in 37 years at CSDR. After his official retirement, he maintained active involvement in the community.

Bummy met his wife, Theresa Connors, at Gallaudet, but didn't marry until 1967. She taught multi-disabled children at CSD until her death in 1973—she was killed by a drunken driver. They had no children. As Bummy told Riverside **Press-Enterprise** reporter Laurie Lucas in 2008 (undoubtedly with a mischievous glint in his eye), "I never remarried because all these women were lined up and if I picked one, I was afraid the rest would shoot themselves."[2]

Bummy has had a distinguished career as a parliamentarian—an expert in the rules governing procedures in non-legislative assemblies, who knows how to conduct meetings and help keep things running smoothly, efficiently, and civilly. Bummy holds membership in two national certifying bodies: the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) and the American Institute of Parliamentarians (AIP). He is considered the first board-certified deaf parliamentarian.

At hearing meetings, the parliamentarian sits next to the president so they can converse on matters of parliamentary law and procedure without being overheard. Where ASL is used, a different arrangement is necessary. Bummy pioneered the use of a partition—a "tent" or "Bummy's Box," as it was called—to safeguard the privacy of the interchanges. It was a hit. Participants appreciated Bummy's inimitable sense of humor, too.

"He's conducted 210 parliamentary workshops."

"To this date, I have conducted 210 (and still counting) parliamentary-procedure workshops all over the country, including Hawaii." His long list includes conventions, NAD, the Jr. NAD Youth Leadership Camp, state and national organizations, schools, clubs, and local communities throughout the nation and in Canada, and a long roster of just about every major Deaf Community-related organization.

His classic booklet, "The Basics of Parliamentary Procedure," used internationally, was expanded into **Bummy's Basic Parliamentary Guide** (DawnSignPress, 1996). Later came the video ***Bummy's Basic Parliamentary Workshop***; it's now available as a DVD.

In November 1985, Bummy went to France as GUAA representative to participate in the bicentennial celebration of Laurent Clerc's birthday. He attended a national Deaf convention in Bourg-en-Bresse, and was impressed by the way participants applauded by waving their arms and hands in the air. He gave an address and got a standing ovation. "The action was so beautifully synchronized that it was just like a sea

of waves and almost made me seasick," he later wrote.[3] Shortly afterwards, he and Gil Eastman unveiled a plaque honoring Clerc at his birthplace in La Balmes-Grottes, then returned to the States. In summer 1986, Bummy gave a parliamentary-procedure workshop at the YLC in Pengilly, Minnesota, told the campers about his experiences in France, and showed them how to applaud French-Deaf style. Campers and staff immediately adopted it, and taught their friends. "Deaf applause" spread everywhere.

On October 24, 1986, at a convocation in the Field House, Gallaudet College officially became Gallaudet University, and Bummy became the first deaf person to receive a doctorate from it—an honorary one.

In August 1987, shortly after President Jerry C. Lee announced his resignation, Bummy, as President of the Alumni Association, officially endorsed a deaf president for Gallaudet University. He sent a letter to GUAA, NAD, and National Fraternal Society of the Deaf. All agreed and promptly began working towards that goal, although each organization followed different strategies.

The Deaf President Now! revolution erupted on March 6, 1988. Summoned to campus, Bummy took an overnight flight from Riverside, arriving in Washington early in the morning of Tuesday, March 8. He convened a meeting of local GUAA board members, raised a $1,000 contribution to the DPN Fund, met with Provost Catherine Ingold, held a press conference, and addressed the crowd at a rally outside Chapel Hall. Bummy affirmed GUAA's support for the protest. That night, he flew back, and on the last day of DPN, the same day Dr. I. King Jordan was appointed president, gave parliamentary-procedure workshops to students at Illinois School for the Deaf and members of Jacksonville's Deaf community. A newly-politicized community needed the training more than ever. (Incidentally, Bummy had given a workshop to Gallaudet's Student Body Government a mere week before DPN began.)

Bummy's service record is, to put it mildly, extensive. From 1982 to 1992 and 1998 to 2001, a total of 13 years (four terms), he was president of GUAA, its longest-serving one ever. He served two terms (1974-78) as president of JDC and two terms (1981-85) as president of California Asso-

Discussing leadership with CSDR students. The 10-by-12-foot table was made by Career Technology Education students.

"For me, Leadership is not just an activity but a way to give back to students and future leaders to open new avenues for our deaf community. For all the achievements that I have, I could not have accomplished them without the support of you and the others. For that, it is always important to give back—as the famous quote goes — 'it is better to give than to receive.'"

ciation of the Deaf—to cite a few. He has been a popular master of ceremonies and moderator at various gatherings.

One of his proudest achievements is his role in helping to get the nation's first statewide telephone-relay system launched, "with the help of the Committee when I was president of CAD." (He also helped launch a TTY-distribution program.) Starting in 1979, he and the other advocates lobbied for the establishment of a statewide 24-hour TRS. After eight years of legislative planning, California finally became the first state to implement it. It was launched on January 1, 1987, with AT&T as a provider. Other states followed suit. By the time President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act in July 1990, around half of the states had TRS. Now, of course, they all do.

February 4, 2010: the ribbon is snipped, and CSDR's Bummy Student Center is (almost) open for business.

California's contract was awarded to Sprint in October 1991, and to MCI in 1996. Complaints about the poor quality of the service multiplied. California became the first state to have a competitive relay service—with two providers. "We had tremendous problems with MCI and I was the one who started to bring in Sprint—again, with the help of others." (MCI is now a subsidiary of Verizon; CRS offers a choice of three providers: Sprint, GoAmerica, and Nordia.)

"Serving in various organizations gives me the pleasure of working with people. The many organizations and offices I have served are too numerous to mention. I am indebted to deaf people for many honors that I have received."

These honors are, likewise, "too numerous to mention." A few favorites: In 1990 he was named Man of the Year by the "47" Alumni Association; in 2003, he was elected to its Hall of Fame. Also in 1990, he received the State Superintendent's Public Service Award. In 1991, he received the Robert W. Leiman Award of the International Platform Association (a high-prestige organization of public personalities, statespeople, and media stars) for popularizing parliamentary procedure. (Some awards and mementos are proudly displayed in Bummy's house in Canyon Crest. His lead-

An enthusiastic audience at the February 4 dedication. Laurie Pietro (holding microphone), CSDR Outreach Specialist and certified interpreter, handled the voice interpreting.

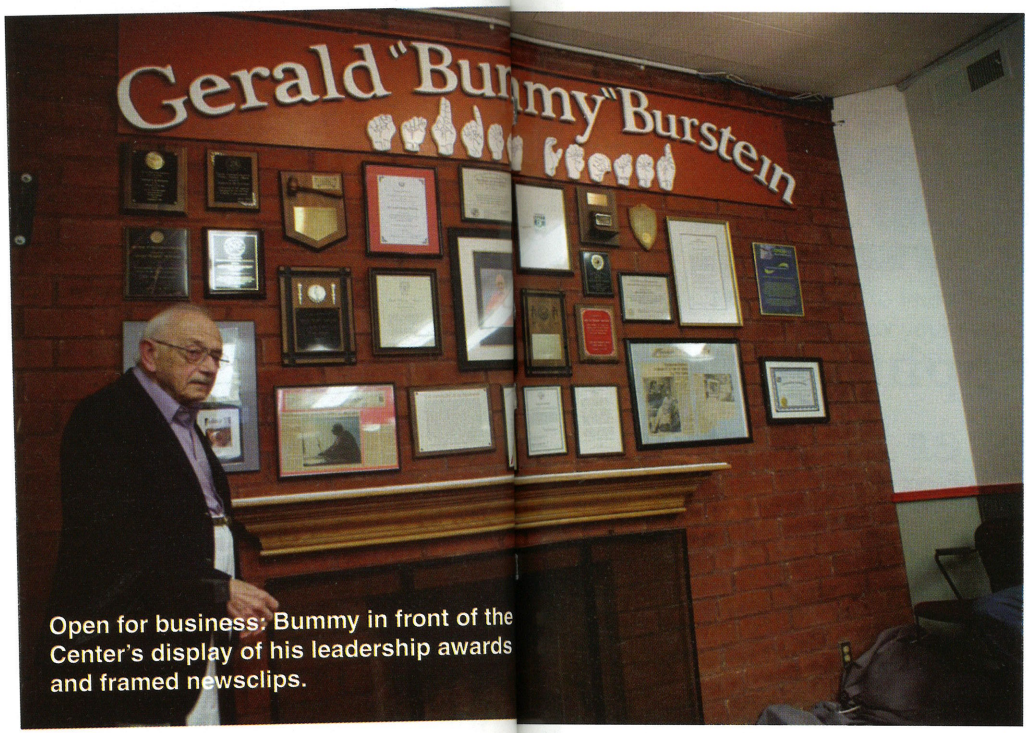
ership awards are now displayed at CSDR's new Student Center.) Soon afterwards, he received CAID's Howard M. Quigley Award, presented annually to an outstanding teacher of the deaf. (Dr. Quigley had been superintendent of MSD when Bummy began his professional career there as a math teacher.)

In February 1992, Bummy was inducted into the Governor's Hall of Fame for People with Disabilities. He told Barbara Metzler of the **Press-Enterprise**, "I was surprised I am classified as disabled."[4] In July 1992, he received GUAA's Alice Cogswell Award. The citation said that he "is in a class by himself."

And so on.

In November 1998, he established a $1-million chair at Gallaudet, one of only two alumni to do so (the other being Bernard Bragg). The official title is "The Gerald 'Bummy' Burstein, '50, Endowed Chair in Leadership." Of course, it's known as the "Bummy Chair." In March 2008, it became the first chair to be fully endowed by a deaf person.

On October 23, 2009, Gallaudet University renamed its Leadership Institute in Bummy's honor.[5]



Open for business: Bummy in front of the Center's display of his leadership awards and framed newsclips.

And on February 4, 2010, Bummy, for once without his trademark porkpie hat with the Gallaudet Bison insignia, wielded a giant pair of scissors to cut the red ribbon at the opening of the Gerald "Bummy" Burstein Student Center—the same office where he had put in a long tenure at CSDR's Director of Media Technology Services—the office he'd called "my second home." Newly renovated, it's now the student-government center—really, a center for promoting leadership. As Sharman Weiner Newman noted:

> As Burstein stood poised in front of the adoring audience, giant scissors in hand, to cut through the ribbon at the ceremony to dedicate the leadership center in his name, one could imagine that the large scissors might certainly be considered a metaphor for this extraordinary man's legacy in life. By having cut through the barriers that often get in the way for the deaf, Bummy has cleared the path ahead for this country's next generation of deaf leaders.[6]

As he proudly told Barbara Metzler, "I'm doing many, many things the average person doesn't do." That's Bummy, all right. Always doing something. Leaving his imprint on history. Sharing a legacy of excellence. And still—gloriously—one of a kind. ■

NOTES

1. This and several other quotes are taken or adapted from Steve Brenner's interview, "NCJD Personality—G. "Bummy Burstein," published in the Spring 1994 issue of the **NCJD Quarterly**. The National Congress of Jewish Deaf (NCJD) is now the Jewish Deaf Congress (JDC). Used with permission.
2. Laurie Lucas, "Deaf Riverside educator accomplishes another first," **Press-Enterprise**, May 12, 2008; posted online.
3. See "Saga of the Waving Applause," **DEAF LIFE**, July 1992.
4. Barbara Metzler, "Deaf instructor stresses ability in disability/Educator-activist honored for work," **Press-Enterprise**, March 2, 1992.
5. See "Bummy's Homecoming Honor," **DEAF LIFE**, December 2009.
6. Sharman Weiner Newman, "Gerald 'Bummy' Burstein Leaves Legacy of Leadership to CSDR Students," CSDR release. Ms. Weiner's an old CSDR colleague of Bummy's. In another release, Seymour S. Bernstein also noted, "Bummy donated money to develop a leadership scholarship with the Community Foundation Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Deaf Life Dedication photos courtesy of Hon Siu (with watermark); others courtesy of CSDR and Bummy Burstein.

DeafView

READERS' VIEWPOINT

What's *your* opinion? Voting is now easier than ever!

The *DeafView* site has been revamped and upgraded. It's easier than ever to vote and submit brief messages expressing your views on hot issues affecting the Deaf community.

You can vote in any or all of the *DeafView* opinion polls. It's a fun way to share *your* thoughts, express *your* opinion, and stand up for *your* views.

www.deafview.com

DeafView

READERS' VIEWPOINT

DEAF LIFE would like to know what you think about major issues affecting the Deaf community. Fax your response to (585) 442-6371, E-mail us at reply@deafview.com or send it to us at Box 23380, Rochester, NY 14692-3380.

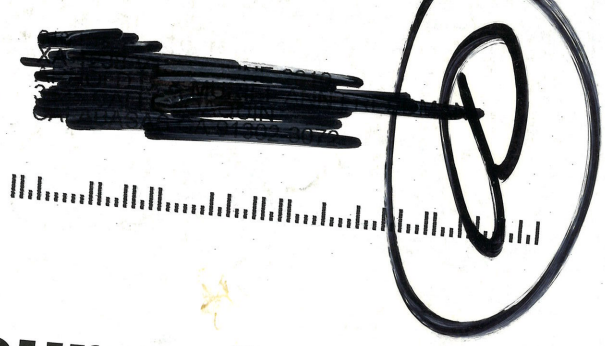
Does the Deaf community get the best possible quality of eye care?

❑Yes ❑No ❑Not sure

Background:
Deaf people are visual people. Vision is our most important sense, the foundation of our best modes of communication, language, and artistry. Yet, from our own observations, we've seen that good vision care is inaccessible to too many Deaf people. There's the communication factor, the economic factor, and the geographic factor. We'd like to know what experiences our readers have had. Do we, as a community, get equally good eye care as the hearing population? If not, what can we do about this?

Deadline: May 1, 2010

Visit the
DeafView homepage at
www.deafview.com
to respond to this and the other upcoming questions.



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